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LB 1348

Who knows what the next small business that will move on into being the next Cabela's? The second part of this bill deals with the area that communities are asking for. We're looking for seed money, not just a giveaway. This will start projects. LB 1348, as amended, will create additional programs specifically targeted at rural and agricultural communities to start ventures. The Agricultural Opportunities Grant Program will provide up to \$75,000 in annual grants to organizations to provide for the enhancement of income opportunities for farms and ranches and rural businesses. This will provide economic and social viability to rural communities and help support small enterprise formation. People will be able to get together and start businesses. We have a real need for these new kind of businesses, whether it's a producer in Herman, Nebraska, I've talked to that wants to have a processing plant on a small scale to process wool, or someone who, in Herman...in Beemer who's talking about bringing producers together to do a feasibility study on a producer-owned packing plant,...

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute.

SENATOR CONNEALY: ...LB 1348 will help this. This is not traditional economic development. This is more. It's harder to do in rural areas. We need to develop wealth out there and LB 1348 will do it. We, to restate, we have a crisis in the state. We really need to act now. I believe that this is the smallest amount that we should do. I appreciate the Ag Committee working on this and I just ask for your support.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Connealy. Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, I don't want to repeat. Thank you, Madam Speaker, members. I don't want to repeat some of what Senator Connealy said, but on page 3 also is another list of some of the...of what the grants may be used to support. I just want to emphasize that: research; education and training; market development; business planning assessment...assistance, feasibility and market studies, capitalization plans, technical assistance; development of cooperatives; community and "multicommunity" initiatives; retention and transfer of agricultural and nonagricultural businesses in rural communities; community-based, farmer or rancher owned